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REMARKS

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the subject application. Applicants request reconsideration of the subject application based on the following remarks.

Claims 1-8 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification as filed. The language of claims 1, 2, and 3 has been incorporated into claim 8, which is now an independent claim. No new matter has been added by the amendments to the specification or the claims.

Claim 8, as amended, is fully compliant with 37 CFR 1.75 including the requirements of paragraph (c). Thus the objection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentably over Kobayashi et al. (U.S. Patent 5,256,512).

The rejection is traversed.

The present invention provides "electrophotographic developer which reduces toner contamination on the surface of a developer carrier and maintains a charging efficiency in a high state even when narrowed is a mass part (development effective range) where an electrostatically charged-image holder is disposed oppositely to a developer carrier and which is stabilized in an image quality in every environmental situation and has a long life and a low cost and an image-forming method using the above developer." See page 7, lines 9-18 of the specification as filed.

Moreover, electrophotographic developer of the invention comprises a two-component developer which comprises a toner comprising at least a binder and a colorant and a carrier which is coated with a resin and has a weight average particle diameter of 40 to 100 μm ; the above toner has a volume average particle diameter of 8 to 11.5 μm ; and the toner particles

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having a diameter of $6.35\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or less account for 20 number % or less. Thus, toners suitable for use in the electrophotographic developers of the invention have a particularly narrow particle size distribution as provided by the smaller average particle diameter and reduced number % of particles having a diameter of less than $6.35\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. Applicants have surprisingly discovered that such toners offer improved performance over larger toner particles (e.g., toners of the invention offer stable image quality in apparatus having an electrostatically charged-image holder which has a radius of $18\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or less).

In contrast, Kobayashi recites "a full-color toner having a good spectral reflection characteristic and a two-component developer containing the same." See, column 3, lines 44-47 of Kobayashi. More particularly, Kobayashi teaches toners which have an average particle diameter of 12.7, 12.4, 12.9, 12.8, 13.2, 12.1, 13.2 and $12.8\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ (see tables 3 and 4 at column 24). The toner materials recited by Kobayashi have a broad particle size distribution profile. That is, Kobayashi teaches toners which larger average particle sizes (between 12 and $13.2\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and higher levels of toner particles with an average size below $6.35\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ (between 13 and 20%). Kobayashi neither discloses nor suggests toner compositions having narrower particle size distributions would offer improved performance in electrophotographic developer applications contemplated by the present invention.

Therefore, one skilled in the art would not have been motivated by Kobayashi at the time the invention was made to prepare the electrophotographic developer provided by either claim 1 or claim 8, which comprise toner particles having a small average particle size of between 8 and $11.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and narrow particle size distribution, e.g., only 20% or less particles having a particle size of $6.35\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ or less. Thus claims 1 and 8 are patentable over Kobayashi. Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1 and are therefore also patentable over Kobayashi.

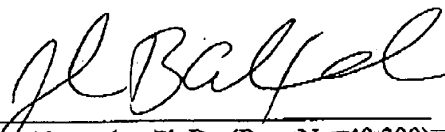
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Early consideration and allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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